

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4908
ANSWERED ON:20.12.2002
NCM VISIT TO JAMMU AND KASHMIR
RAGHUNATH JHA;SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV (PATIL)

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the National Commission for Minorities had to visit Jammu and Kashmir State during August 2002 in connection with the return of Kashmiri Pandits who left the valley 13 years back as reported in the `Indian Express` dated August 19, 2002;
- (b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;
- (c) the further steps taken by the Government/State Government to rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits;
- (d) whether the J&K Government had urged the National Commission for Minorities to seek permission of the Election Commission before the proposed visit; and
- (e) if so, the facts thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI S. B. MOOKHERJEE)

(a), (b), (d) and (e) No, Sir. The National Commission for Minorities did not visit Jammu & Kashmir during August, 2002. Although the National Commission for Minorities had written to the Chief Secretary vide o. letter No.8/12/37/1/2000-NCM dated 12th August, 2002 on the proposed visit to Jammu & Kashmir with a group of Kashmiri Pandits who wanted to get back to their homes in the valley, the Chief Secretary of the State Government of Jammu & Kashmir vide his d.o. letter No.PS/CS-10/2002 dated 14.08.2002 however advised the National Commission for Minorities to seek clearance from the Election Commission for the proposed visit to the State in view of the elections to the State Assembly and the applicability of Model Code of Conduct.

The National Commission for Minorities being a statutory body, suo motu decided not to visit the State during this period.

(c) In October 2000, Government of Jammu & Kashmir submitted an Action Plan for the Return and Rehabilitation of Kashmiri Migrants involving a total amount of Rs.2589.73 crores to enable 52,689 families of Kashmiri migrants comprising about 1.25 lakhs people, at present residing in Jammu, Delhi and other States/UTs, to return to the Valley. The Action Plan is to be implemented in phases, which envisages return and rehabilitation of migrant families in areas where clusters of migrant houses are available and in villages/mohallas in the Kashmir Valley districts with sizeable Kashmir Pandit population and where security is already provided. To begin with, 166 houses forming 15 clusters had been identified by the State Government in Srinagar and Badgam districts, which are considered safe for the return of owners of these houses. The list of these clusters was published in the newspapers and steps were taken to identify the families and find out their willingness to return to their homes. About 50 families, which were registered with Relief Organization, Jammu, were contacted personally to give their consent for return to the valley on the basis of the package announced by the Government. Interactive sessions with some of these families have been held but none of the families have agreed to return to the Valley so far.